

## Case Study #3:

Geneva City School District, NY



**How did a district that contains over 95% of their county's low income housing receive the US Department of Education's Model Professional Development Award?**



**Good teachers who understand their students' learning needs and cultivate thoughtful learners by utilizing the Thoughtful Classroom strategies.**

The student population that Geneva City School District educates is diverse along socio-economic, racial, and cultural constituencies. Geneva is located in the Finer Lakes region of New York and is geographically isolated from major metropolitan areas. However, the Geneva City School District is presented with the same challenges of pockets of economic hardship that face many inner-city school districts. There exists in Geneva the dichotomy of having the highest percentage of families living in poverty in the county as well as being home to many families employed by a post-doctoral research facility, two colleges, and a regional healthcare facility.

The guiding belief of the district, that all children can achieve at high levels, means that teachers must receive the resources and training necessary to ensure that all children are successful. Given the increasing demands of changing New York State Regents exams, more rigorous graduation requirements, and new mandatory accountability measures, staff development needed to be supportive and focused on organizational, individual, and collegial improvement. Geneva implemented a shared decision-making model at district and school levels and emphasized best research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership.

Analyses of student data and the results of a teacher needs assessment and led Geneva to the Silver and Strong Learning Styles model as one of the district reforms.

Professional development was focused on increasing teachers' expertise to assist students in meeting the new standards and assessments. The Learning Style design included expert training, peer coaching, and twice monthly study groups where teachers planned together to use strategies and then share the results of their students' work. Release time was scheduled for reflective planning and summer training sessions. Teachers plan together, observe each other in the classroom, and examine student work to modify their own teaching. People who are experienced with these strategies mentor teachers just starting out with their three-year learning commitment. After successful intervention during the academic year, the Learning Styles model was incorporated into the district's secondary summer school program starting in 1995.

### **The results are in...**

In 1998, the Geneva City School District won a National Award for Model Professional Development. In 2000, the North Street Elementary School was rated one of five Outstanding Title I Schools in the state of New York. Across the district, continued collegial professional development meant **Sustained High Performance!**

### **Results for General Education Students Scoring at or Above the New York State Minimum Level**

	1996	1997	1998		1996	1997	1998	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Gr Math</b>	100%	99%	100%		<b>6<sup>th</sup> Gr Reading</b>	89%	91%	88%
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Gr Reading</b>	85%	92%	95%		<b>6<sup>th</sup> Gr Math</b>	98%	95%	98%
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Gr Writing</b>	97%	100%	98%					

	2002	2003	2004		2002	2003	2004	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Gr Math</b>	98%	96%	95%		<b>8<sup>th</sup> Gr Math</b>	81%	89%	86%
<b>4<sup>th</sup> sGr Lang Arts</b>	94%	96%	89%		<b>8<sup>th</sup> Gr Lang Arts</b>	96%	96%	86%

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